



Winter 2025 Newsletter

Creative Writing Department

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Introduction

Greetings! As we head into the winter break, I wanted to take this opportunity as Chair of the Department of Creative Writing to express my gratitude for our extraordinary students, our unmatched faculty, and our extraordinary staff—and for some very good news in our department.

Since its founding in 1954, the San Francisco State University Poetry Center has presented and documented the work of outstanding contemporary poets and related artists, creating and preserving new and historic audio and video recordings, while assuring public awareness of and access to live performances and archival resources. The nationally recognized center is not just a boon for our department and our university; it's a treasure that benefits the entire Bay Area literary community

This year, we are thrilled to announce a \$227,000 commitment from three anonymous donors over the next five years to sustain and grow the Poetry Center. This generous support will make it possible to digitize and preserve more than 5,000 hours of rare analog audio and video recordings from the Poetry Center archives, expand event programming that brings poets and writers to our community, provide student research support for those working with the archive, and fund student worker positions that offer hands-on experience in running a literary institute.

Our university system continues to navigate a budget crisis, and we are keenly aware of the ways in which this impacts our department and our university—and are working hard to mitigate these impacts. But amid all this, news of these generous gifts represents a tremendous step forward for Creative Writing at SFSU.

If you share our vision for the future of Creative Writing and student achievement, please connect with our Development Director, Soo Kim (soo.kim@sfsu.edu). You can help us launch new scholarships, a speaker series, and other initiatives that enrich student success and provide a vibrant, well-rounded education in Creative Writing.

Meantime, our amazing students—the beating heart of our program—continue to inspire us every day with their talent, hard work and industriousness. The faculty is so proud of what they accomplish here in Creative Writing, as writers and as human beings.

Wishing you all a successful 2026!

Warmly,

Chanan



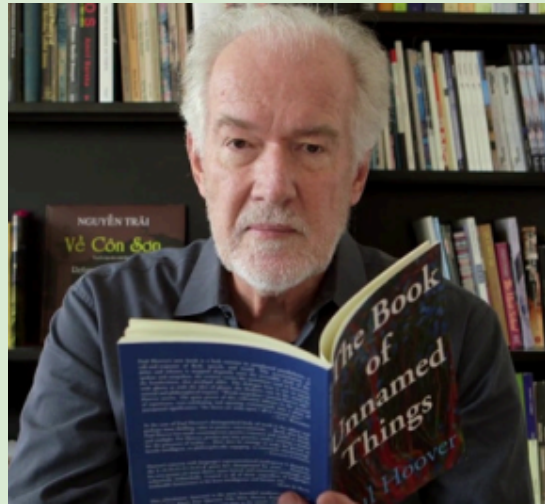
Faculty News

May-lee Chai's essay, "A Mother-Daughter Blood Story" appeared in the anthology *Nothing Compares to You: What Sinéad O'Connor Means to Us* (One Signal, Atria, July 2025). She published multiple critical review essays in the *Minnesota Star Tribune*, *Seattle Times*, and the *New York Times Book Review*. She participated on the panel "But It Wasn't Written in English: Translated Literature in the Creative Writing Classroom" for AWP 25.



Caro De Robertis has an essay called "Gender Euphoria is a Power Source" in the new anthology *Both/And: Essays by Trans and Gender Non-conforming people of Color*, edited by Denne Michele Norris. Their novel *The Palace of Eros* was a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award in speculative fiction. They are also co-curating a museum exhibition, "Conjuring Power: the Roots & Futures of Queer and Trans Movements," which blends art and archive and will be on display March-August 2026 at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Paul Hoover has been invited to Vietnam during the fall break to present his translation, with poet Nguyen Do, of *The Story of Kieu* by Nguyen Du, the most beloved work of literature in the country's history.



Nona Caspers' work has appeared or is forthcoming from *Sun Magazine*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Southern Review*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, and *Cimarron Review*. She attended Virginia Center for the Arts residency.

Alumni, Associates, & Current Student News

Anita Amirrezvani wrote the libretto for *Earth 2.0*, an opera with music by Jake Heggie that premiered at the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in December, 2024, with choreography by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Anita hopes to collaborate with other musicians and dancers in the future.

Tom Andes published his debut, *Wait There Till You Hear from Me*, a contemporary detective novel, with Crescent City Books. His stories were included in *Best American Mystery and Suspense Stories 2025*, *The Best Private Eyes Stories of the Year 2025*, and received a Shamus Award.

Laura Atkinson was selected as a writer for a Ucross Fellowship in Clearmont, WY for Fall of 2025. She also launched a website for her [lyric and songwriting work](#). Affiliation to the Creative Writing Department: MFA Graduate ('23), former undergraduate creative writing instructor.

Erika Bjune ('93) published *Organizing for Impact: A Guide to Cultivating Collaborative Leadership, Building Adaptive Teams, and Doing Work That Matters* (2025). She is also co-editor of *We Hope Magazine*, a bi-annual digital publication which features articles and fiction on sustainability and its intersection with social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Maureen Bogues (MA '06 English / Playwriting) has been performing her personal stories at venues around San Francisco, including Casements bar for their Seanchoiche storytelling events. She also teaches storytelling workshops online.

Marianne Brems' fifth poetry collection *Within the Trifles* will be published by Kelsay Books in December 2025. She was also interviewed in Flapper Press September 2025. Individual poems were published in *Cider Press Review*, *The Big Windows Review*, *The Broken Spine* and other literary magazines.

Molly Brown coauthored *Coming Together in the Great Turning: Collective Liberation and Work That Reconnects*, published by New Society Publishers in November 2025. The book addresses anti-oppression understanding and practices for facilitating transformative group work, expanding who is welcomed and respected in workshop spaces.

Rachel Bublitz has had a busy 2025, with two published plays, *The Hardy Girls* and *Funny, Like An Abortion*, a developmental production of her commissioned play, *Hear Us Roar*, with the University of Utah, as well as publication of her playwriting book: *Building a Playwright in Three Acts*.

Jonna Carter's middle grade book, *Stitchcraft* is set to hit shelves November 25th, 2025. It's a cozy, romp of a novel for kids ages eight to twelve, and centers around a young crafting nerd who turns every knitting and sewing project she makes into a magic spell. Jonna continues to write children's stories for *Folkmanis Puppets*. Look out for them at your local toy store!

Annie Dawid's essay "Jim Jones and Donald Trump: What Do They Share?" was featured on the *Inkspot Publishing Blog*. "Fathom These Events: Stories of Peoples Temple and Jonestown" was published in *The Jonestown Report*, 2025.

Cartoonist-poet Trinidad Escobar's nonfiction comic strips on artists in Gaza were included in the 2025 collection of journalism comics called *Cartoonists for Palestine*, published by Crucial Comix. Trinidad's interview on disability and Filipino ethics in storytelling is included in the new book *Making Nonfiction Comics*, published October 2025 by Abrams.

Don Falcone produced the Spirits Burning & Michael Moorcock album *The End Of All Songs - Part 2*, released in August on Purple Pyramid Records. Falcone co-wrote and performed on all tracks. The album, which includes 40 musicians, completes Spirits Burning's four-album adaptation of Moorcock's *Dancers At The End Of Time* novel.

Zeus Fondanarosa's debut queer horror novel *Haunting the Scavenger* is set to release this spring, March 24th 2026, under his pen name Arlo Blackthorn. Additionally, his flash fiction work *All the Pleasures Have Soured* was published in the October edition of *You Are Here, Aurora IL*.

Joan Gelfand, Alumnae, spoke to the BRIO Financial Services and IKAR synagogue book clubs about her award-winning book, *Outside Voices: A Memoir of the Berkeley Revolution*. Joan also has a forthcoming review of Sheila Smith McKoy's collection, *The Bones Beneath* (winner of the Black Lawrence Press award) in *North Carolina Literary Review*.

Robert Glück- NYRB Classics republished Robert Glück's *Jack the Modernist*. His long story, *Purple Men 2000*, appeared as a book. Interviews: "Bomb Magazine," "The Yale Review," and "The San Francisco Review of Whatever." Glück wrote a preface for Kenward Elmslie's *The Orchid Stories*, and appeared in a BBC podcast. He's an emeritus professor.

Ann Guy (MA 2018, MFA 2020) had essays published in *Hippocampus* and are forthcoming in *River Teeth Journal*. She is currently teaching creative non-fiction, fiction, and generative writing classes at The Writing Salon.

Vinnie Hansen- *Crime Writer*, a suspense novel by Vinnie Hansen (Creative Writing, '82), was released by Level Best Books in September, 2025. "Replete with heart-stopping moments, action, and unexpected realizations, *Crime Writer* is a winner."—**D. Donovan**, Senior Reviewer, *Midwest Book Review*.

Leticia Hernández-Linares' poetry was published in *Huizache*, and her translation of poet Lourdes Ferrufino's work appeared in the *New England Review*. Her essay, "Counting with Stories," is included in *The Life, Literature, and Legacy of Luis J. Rodríguez*. She was named a 2025 San Francisco Library Laureate.

Gwen Hicks was a finalist for the 2025 Rhysling Award. Their fiction was published in *Heartlines Spec* and is forthcoming in *Trollbreath Magazine*. Their poetry appeared in *Cottonmouth Journal* and *Dangerous to Go Alone! 2*. They were a Speculative Fiction fellow at the Lambda Literary Retreat for Emerging LGBTQ Voices.

Judy Juanita's ninth book, *Abortion (or Woman as Threepfold Murderess)* includes stories and poems published in *KONCH* in 2024 and 2025. The Before Columbus Foundation awarded her its 2024 Reginald Lockett Lifetime Achievement Award.

Hailey Johansson completed her MFA in Creative Writing at SFSU in 2023 and had two stories, "A Thoughtful Friend" and "Wonder for the Echoes," published by *Wild Willow Magazine* this year.

Jeff Kaliss (MFA, '16) continues as an active contributor of features, artist profiles, and reviews covering various genres of music and entertainment for several online and print publications. His interview-based profile of Linda Ronstadt won first place in the 17th annual National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards.

M.B. Kelly has published the first book in an urban fantasy trilogy "To Want for Nothing: Book One of the Urban Warlocks," an adventure of magic, intrigue, and romance set in a city that could exist in the Bay Area.

Scott Lambridis's (MFA 2012) debut novel, *St. Ulphia's Dead*, to be released by Regal House (July 2026). Born in SFSU's Novella class, the literary/magical realist novel follows two disgraced researchers investigating mass psychosis and disappearances on a remote island. "Exquisitely written... A wild, unexpected, and darkly comic ride." (Peter Orner).

Gerry Anne Lenhart graduated in 1985. Their book is being released in the next few days: *THE ROSE OF BEING: Jung, Consciousness, Myth and Metaphor* (2025) is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. It is a psychology book focusing on Jung's 4 psychological functions. Lenhart is a clinical psychologist and Art therapist.

Bob Levin (MA 1995) had his newest book, *MESSIAHS, MESHUGGANAHs, MISANTHROPEs and MYSTERIES: True Tales of Comics, Creativity and Conflict*, published by FU Press, an imprint of Fantagraphics Books.

Kermit Lynch's novel, *AT POUPON'S TABLE*, was released on September 30.

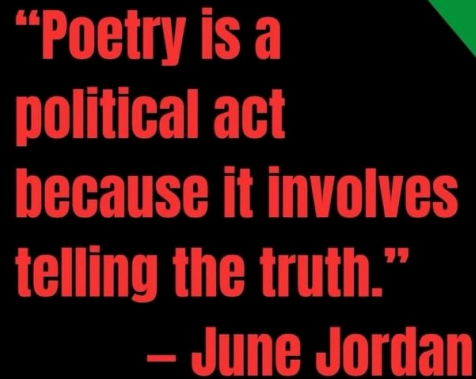
Vanessa Micale published their essay "[Boca del Lobo](#)," in *Guernica*. Their work is forthcoming in *Mānoa: Architectures of Futuropasados* and the Uruguayan anthology *Lugares Que No Recordamos Bien* from Ginkgo Editora. Vanessa was in conversation with Caro De Robertis at Powell's for the book release of *So Many Stars*.

Carol Muske-Dukes (alum, as Carol Muske, English/Creative Writing) has poems to be published in *The Atlantic magazine* (December, 2025), *REVEL Magazine*, and *Red Letter* (November). She also has two poems included in the *THE NEW YORKER, A Century of Poetry anthology, 1925-2025*. Also 2025 readings as former California Poet Laureate

Jim Nelson signed with MX Publishing in London March 2025, to produce hardbound and audiobook editions of his historical epistolary *A Man Named Baskerville*. The audiobook is narrated by prominent voice talent Michael Langan.

Mary Peleen had her poem, "Emergency," published in the Fall 2025 issue of the *Massachusetts Review*.

Evelyn Jean Pine's poem, "Train Song for the Guy I Left Behind," was published in *PULP* in January 2025 and her sonnet, "The Skater Lusts," is included in the *Gun Powder Press Anthology, WOMEN IN A GOLDEN STATE: CALIFORNIA POETS AT 60 AND BEYOND*, published in May.



"Poetry is a political act because it involves telling the truth."
– June Jordan

Jan Probst's play *The Prophecy of the Crows*, was broadcast on Wild Rose Moon Radio Hour, WVPE in Elkhart/South Bend, Indiana. The taping of the production aired on PBS affiliate station WNIT in northern Indiana and southern Michigan. This summer, Jan was invited to join the 2025-26 Playground-SF Writers Pool.

Tracy Santa (BA'78 MA'85) published the essay "Souled American's Slow Resurrection" in *PopMatters* in February 2025. His *Naugatuck Valley Boy EP*, recorded with the Wild Hares, was released in January 2025 on Pill Pauper Records and is available on Bandcamp.

[Sommer Schafer's](#) (MFA '13) second book, *HOPE*, a novel-in-stories about small-town Alaska, releases from Unsolicited Press November 25, 2025. Read all about it: <http://www.sommerschaferauthor.com>.

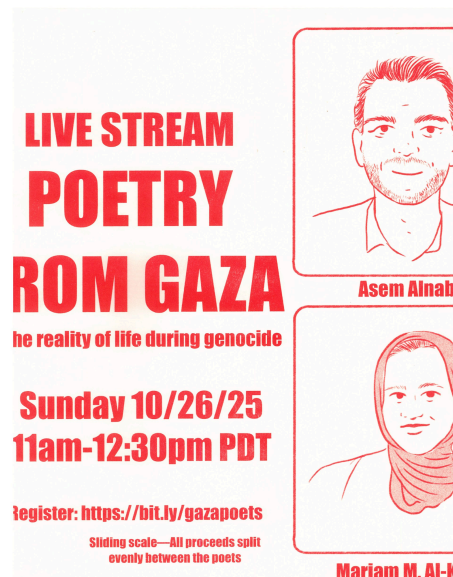
Nina Schuyler's collection, *In This Ravishing World*, won the Oakland PEN Josephine Miles Literary Award and was a finalist for the Northern California Book Award. It won the W.S. Porter Prize and the Prism Prize for Climate Literature.



Raia Small's essay "The Deer" is forthcoming in *Zyzzyva* this December. She was a finalist for the 2025 Tom Howard/John H. Reid Fiction & Essay Contest judged by Mina Manchester. This semester, she's enjoying being on the staff of *14 Hills* and rediscovering her love of poetry.

Sierra Warrick was one of the primary organizers of LIVE-STREAM POETRY FROM GAZA, a reading by three poets in/from Gaza facilitated by Artists Against Apartheid, the Palestinian Youth Movement, and JVP Bay Area, as well as poetry coordinator for MECA's fundraiser/exhibition *A CHILD'S VIEW FROM GAZA* at Adobe Books.

Jessica Smith, also known as **Jaine**, has dedicated her literary time to *14 Hills* magazine as the Lead CNF editor & co-art editor. As for publishing, she published her first issue of *Saturn in Gemini* in February 2025.



Strides in our Student-led Publications!

Fourteen Hills Literary Magazine



Since our inception in 1994, we have featured both emerging and established authors. Works published in *Fourteen Hills* have been selected for the O’Henry Prize, Pushcart Prize Special Mentions, the Best American Poetry Prize Anthology, and Best American Short Stories, and more.

Editors-In-Chief Judas Ātman & Leo Fariash

At *Fourteen Hills*, our mission is to publish work that challenges conventions and subverts entrenched narratives. We work to simplify diverse voices with the intention of publishing the boundaries of what literature can be.



Transfer Magazine



Transfer Magazine is a bi-annual periodical created by SF State's Creative Writing students. The magazine is edited, curated, designed, and adored by the department's undergrads, and the course is currently taught by MFA Candidate **Sean Sanford**. We feature fiction, non-fiction, poetry, interviews, art and photography, all by current SFSU students. In operation since 1956, we continue to spend each semester joyously toiling to create a snapshot of our students, proudly showcasing our vibrant artistic and literary community. We've featured authors who would go on to illustrious careers, like Anne Rice, whose very first published story was in the pages of *Transfer* in 1965. *Transfer* Issue no.130 is coming out in December 2025.

A Poetry Renaissance!



The Poetry Center is coming back to life! With the retirement of longtime director, Steve Dickson, and associate director, Elise Ficarra, in 2024, the Center entered a state of transition. Once an autonomous unit, the Center has now come under the auspices of the Creative Department. Different strategies for maintaining the Center were considered, hampered by a lack of funding. Fortunately, last summer several generous donors from the community stepped up to gift the Center with over \$100,000, most of it to be distributed over the next five years.

Last summer, two new co-directors of the Poetry Center were appointed: **Prof. Tonya Foster** and **Prof. Andrew Joron**, both from the Creative Writing Dept. Thanks to the new funding, the co-directors will be able to begin organizing events featuring prominent poets from across the country. The new funding will also enable completing the digitization of the [Poetry Center Archive](#), a collection of thousands of audio and video recordings reaching back to the founding of the Center in 1954.

The recordings represent a treasure trove of canonical American poets reading their work. Once digitized, the recordings will be made available to scholars and poets on the Center's website. Both live events and resurrection of the archive will confirm the Poetry Center's status as a local and national literary hotspot.



Support our Future with Donations!

Every gift to the Creative Writing Department helps students discover and strengthen their unique voices. Your tax-deductible support allows us to expand writing workshops, provide mentorship opportunities, and bring accomplished authors to campus. With your help, we can ensure our students have access to the tools, guidance, and community they need to thrive as storytellers. Help us nurture creativity that resonates far beyond the classroom.

Make your gift online:
<https://give.sfsu.edu/26M11CREAT>



If you are generously interested in supporting scholarships or exploring planned giving: Please contact Soo Kim, Senior Director of Development, at soo.kim@sfsu.edu or 415-338-7113.

✧ Sincerely,
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